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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN ANGOLA (MONUA)

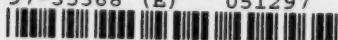
I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1135 (1997) of 29 October 1997, in which the Council requested me to report on the compliance of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) with all its obligations as set out in resolution 1127 (1997) of 28 August 1997, as well as on the schedule for the resumed withdrawal of the military personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA). The present report covers developments since my most recent report, dated 17 October 1997 (S/1997/807).

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. The Security Council in resolution 1135 (1997) approved the new measures to be taken by the international community against UNITA. Those measures had a serious political and psychological impact upon the situation in Angola. Following the adoption of the resolution, my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, travelled to Andulo on 31 October 1997 to discuss with the UNITA leader, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, the status of the Angolan peace process. While reaffirming his commitment to the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex), Mr. Savimbi informed my Special Representative of the forthcoming meeting of the UNITA Political Committee to review the emerging situation. After four days of deliberations, the Commission on 4 November issued a communiqué claiming that the imposition of sanctions was unjust and stating that, as a result of the sanctions, UNITA would face "enormous difficulties" in fulfilling its remaining tasks under the Lusaka Protocol. However, in a subsequent meeting with my Special Representative, and again during the session of the Joint Commission on 5 November, the head of the UNITA delegation reaffirmed his movement's intention to maintain its commitment to continue to cooperate with the peace process. He indicated, however, that it would take some time to regain the momentum in the implementation of the pending tasks, owing to the need to "convince" UNITA supporters to cooperate.

3. On 31 October 1997, the Government of Angola issued a statement outlining the developments leading to the imposition of sanctions against UNITA and



reiterating its commitment to continued dialogue with UNITA and to national reconciliation. On 11 November, the President of Angola, Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, had a telephone conversation with Mr. Savimbi, during which they exchanged views on the peace process and agreed to continue consultations aimed at finalizing arrangements for their meeting in Angola. On 19 November, in an interview with a leading Angolan newspaper, President dos Santos suggested that the meeting should take place in early December, shortly after his return to Angola from his current trip abroad. My Special Representative has been urging both parties to agree on the date and venue of the meeting as soon as possible.

4. On 17 November 1997, another extensive discussion took place in Andulo between Mr. Savimbi and my Special Representative, who was accompanied by the representatives of the three observer States to the Angolan peace process (Portugal, Russian Federation and United States of America). During the talks, the UNITA leadership presented to the United Nations a list of concerns and accused the Government of seeking to destroy UNITA's political structures in the countryside, thus creating a new impasse in the peace process. Mr. Beye and the representatives of the observer States once again impressed on UNITA the urgent need to resume the implementation of the remaining tasks, including the full demilitarization of UNITA and the rapid extension of State administration throughout Angola, and promised to verify all UNITA allegations. At the same time, they called upon UNITA to desist from restricting the freedom of movement of MONUA personnel, which has become a serious impediment to the execution of the mandate entrusted to the United Nations.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITA OBLIGATIONS

A. Military and police aspects

5. Despite persistent tensions, in particular in Cuango and Lucapa (Lunda Norte Province), as well as in Kuito, Huila and Malange provinces, which are the result of continuing acts of banditry, and troop movements by both parties, the military and security situation in the country remained relatively calm. While tensions were prevailing throughout Angola before the coming into force of the new sanctions on 29 October 1997, there was still a measure of cooperation between the parties. However, three weeks after the imposition of sanctions, UNITA severed almost all contacts with the Government and MONUA, except at the level of the Joint Commission.

6. On several occasions during the reporting period, MONUA military and civilian police observers not only were prevented from carrying out their patrols, in particular in UNITA-controlled areas, but were also harassed and physically attacked. The free movement of people and goods in the country continued to be impeded by the checkpoints established by both the Government and UNITA. The resumption of mine laying activities by UNITA troops and their supporters, as well as by the Angola National Police in some areas, led to increased tensions, as did troop movements of the Forças Armadas Angolanas (FAA) undertaken without prior notification of MONUA. On 28 November, according to media reports, Government troops had forcibly taken control of a number of small diamond-mining areas held by UNITA in Lunda Norte Province.

7. According to available information, between the adoption on 29 October 1997 of Security Council resolution 1135 (1997) and 20 November, 84 small and large aircraft had landed in UNITA-controlled areas. Owing to the restrictions imposed by UNITA on MONUA's verification activities, it was not possible to register the identification numbers of all these aircraft. In addition, there have been persistent reports that UNITA continues to conduct military training and resupply. Also, armed UNITA personnel remain visible in and around their strongholds in Andulo and Bailundo.

8. After a three-week suspension, on 21 November 1997, UNITA resumed the registration and the demobilization of its "residual" troops. In the last few weeks, it has presented to the United Nations additional armed personnel, including 145 senior officers registered in Bailundo in November and December. This brings the number of the "registered" residual troops to the level of 6,899 out of the total of 7,759 remaining armed personnel officially declared by UNITA. So far, UNITA has not provided the United Nations with a more credible figure of its "residual" forces. In the meantime, UNITA informed MONUA of the existence of 56 communication sets in different parts of the country which it said were being used to coordinate activities related to the extension of State administration and the registration and demobilization of its remaining troops. MONUA has so far verified 43 communication sets, while the remaining equipment is yet to be verified, owing mainly to lack of cooperation on the part of UNITA.

9. With regard to demobilization, all 15 UNITA quartering areas have now been closed, bringing the total number of the formally demobilized UNITA personnel to 40,059, including 5,647 war-disabled soldiers. However, the demobilization of UNITA military war-disabled has continued at several centres.

B. Extension of State administration

10. Following the issuance by its Political Commission of a statement on 4 November 1997, the UNITA leadership announced that the extension of State administration would be suspended pending an additional "assessment" of the status of the peace process and a resolution of the problems which had arisen between the Government and UNITA authorities in some areas of the country. On 5 November, the Joint Commission expressed serious concern over this announcement, which had been made despite the earlier promises of the UNITA representative in Luanda to the contrary. After further delay, on 21 November, UNITA presented to the Government its new proposals on the normalization of State administration. Following the Government's approval of these proposals, the Provincial Intersectoral Operational Groups, composed of the representatives of the two parties and the United Nations, held meetings in most of the provinces to work out the modalities for the implementation of the agreed programme.

11. On 22 November 1997, the extension of State administration resumed throughout the country and is progressing, albeit at a very slow pace. As of 4 December, central administration had been extended to 200 localities, out of a total of 344 areas which have to be normalized. These included Cuango, Mavinga and Negage, three of the five strategically important areas previously under UNITA control. So far, the extension of State administration has been concluded

only in four provinces (Huila, Kwanza Norte, Bengo and Zaire) out of a total of 18 Angolan provinces. In Uige Province, UNITA declared a temporary suspension of the normalization process, pending the investigation into the death of one of its members, as a result of alleged police brutality; the disappearance of another member; as well as the confiscation of UNITA property in the town of Negage. In Malange Province, UNITA indicated that it was suspending the extension of State administration until a probe into the death of 10 of its supporters while in Government police custody (this incident was later confirmed and condemned by MONUA). Regarding the politically sensitive areas of Andulo and Bailundo, where UNITA headquarters is currently located, UNITA calls for this issue to be discussed during the planned meeting between President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi.

12. In the meantime, the consolidation of State administration in localities where central authority has been established has become an increasingly difficult exercise, owing to the growing tensions between the Angolan National Police and UNITA sympathizers. UNITA accuses the Government of attempting to occupy these areas by force and claims that the conduct of the Government security operations against banditry is actually aimed at dismantling UNITA's party structures. For its part, the Government accuses UNITA of obstructing the work of the newly installed local authorities, and of trying to run a parallel administration. The cases which MONUA has been able to verify tend to confirm some of the accusations made by both parties. In order to allay some of the above concerns, the Government has decided to suspend the special security operations conducted by FAA in the southern regions of the country. In the middle of November 1997, it submitted to the Joint Commission a new programme for the disarmament of the civilian population, to be implemented in three stages, starting with a public awareness campaign.

13. On 24 November 1997, Mr. Savimbi sent me a letter expressing strong concern about the Government's actions against UNITA members. I have instructed my Special Representative to investigate the allegations contained in the letter, some of which have been confirmed by MONUA. In other instances, however, the alleged actions appear to have been perpetrated by bandits. On 2 December, MONUA reported the existence of a huge bunker containing several hundred bodies unearthed by a FAA unit in Central Angola. In the meantime, MONUA confirmed that some UNITA party members had been arrested and mistreated by Civil Defence elements in Piqui (Uige Province).

C. Transformation of the UNITA station Radio Vorgan into a non-partisan broadcasting facility

14. Following its submission of the necessary application for the establishment of an FM network to replace its shortwave radio station, UNITA was allocated a frequency for the new facility in Luanda. On 13 October 1997, it requested additional frequencies for its planned FM radio stations in other Angolan cities. Also in October, UNITA sent to Luanda the management team of the future non-partisan radio station, "Radio Despertar", to discuss administrative and technical procedures with the authorities. However, the Government recently indicated that UNITA must provide additional information before Radio Despertar could be authorized to become operational. A reply is still being awaited.

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Regrettably, since the coming into force of the new sanctions against UNITA, the dissemination of hostile propaganda, especially over Radio Vorgan, has resumed.

IV. WITHDRAWAL OF MONUA MILITARY PERSONNEL

15. In my previous report dated 17 October 1997 (S/1997/807), I recommended a slight postponement of the withdrawal of United Nations troops from Angola. This recommendation was supported by the Security Council. The drawdown resumed on 3 December. The strength of United Nations military personnel now stands at 2,495, including 192 military observers, 78 military staff officers, 1,668 troops and 557 military support personnel. With the completion of the quartering of UNITA troops, which was the main task to be performed by United Nations formed units, I believe that the Mission can now proceed with the gradual downsizing between the second half of this month and the first week of February 1998. According to present plans, which have been coordinated with the troop-contributing countries, approximately 700 military personnel from Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Portuguese logistic unit as well as a number of military observers and staff officers will be repatriated by the end of December. This will leave MONUA with approximately 1,750 military personnel of various categories, including the rapid reaction force to be deployed in six regions of Angola. The month of December would, therefore, serve as an interim period during which the deployment of the United Nations forces in Angola would undergo major changes so that MONUA can achieve the planned quick reaction configuration by the first week of January 1998.

16. The repatriation of the military component of the Mission will resume in the middle of January in order to be reduced to the level initially envisaged for MONUA, as described in paragraph 45 (e) of my report dated 5 June 1997 (S/1997/438). However, in view of the complexity of the security situation in Angola, I will continue to review the requirements of the Mission and, if need be, adjust the drawdown in January/February 1998. I intend to present my proposals concerning the final phase of the withdrawal of the formed units in my next report to the Council, which is due on 13 January 1998.

V. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

17. During the reporting period, the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit, together with its partner programmes and agencies, continued to carry out the demobilization process, including registration, issuance of identification cards, transportation of demobilized ex-combatants to their places of choice and the provision of reintegration kits.

18. As of 4 December 1997, a total of 40,059 UNITA personnel had been demobilized, out of the total of 78,887 troops registered in the selection and demobilization centres and the military war disabled centres. In addition, 6,889 UNITA "residual" personnel had been registered in situ, of whom 424 had been demobilized. On 10 November 1997, demobilization operations were suspended in Cuando Cubango Province after two United Nations staff members were attacked and injured there by UNITA elements. However, despite the disruptions and

delays, demobilization has been completed in the last three selection and demobilization centres (Andulo, Lumege and Licua).

19. The Technical Working Group on Demobilization and Reintegration of the Joint Commission has finalized procedures for the demobilization of the special categories of UNITA personnel consisting of the UNITA elements incorporated into the National Police, as well as into the programmes of the National Institute for the Removal of Obstacles and Explosive Ordnance (INAROE) and the National Institute for the Socio-Professional Reintegration of Ex-Soldiers (IRSEM). However, the overall demobilization programme continues to experience serious delays, which affect the pace of the peace process. There are also serious concerns over a new increase in incidents involving UNITA attacks on humanitarian workers (see para. 18), which has been vigorously condemned by MONUA. Although, at his 17 November meeting with Mr. Beye and the representatives of the three observer States, Mr. Savimbi promised to punish the perpetrators, MONUA still awaits information from UNITA on the identity of the assailants and the disciplinary action taken against them.

20. Regrettably, the donors' response to the 1997 Humanitarian Appeal for Angola is still inadequate. MONUA and the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit have repeatedly expressed serious concern over the lack of funds necessary to complete the vital demobilization programme. In order to complete it as presently planned, it will also be necessary to continue funding the activities of the Coordination Unit's Demobilization and Reintegration Office through the assessed budget until the end of March 1998.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

22. It is disquieting that, three years after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol, several of its key provisions, in particular the demilitarization of UNITA troops and the extension of State administration, still remain to be completed. The peace process continues to be slow, with intermittent surges of UNITA cooperation and long periods of stagnation following one another. Since the issuance of my last report on 17 October 1997 (S/1997/807), there has been no significant progress in the implementation of the remaining tasks.

23. Both parties, but in particular UNITA, are responsible for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Despite the repeated appeals by the international community, UNITA has continued to fail to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions demanding its unconditional cooperation in the fulfilment of its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol.

24. The resumption by UNITA on 21 November of the implementation of its remaining tasks has slightly improved the general security situation in the country. However, it is imperative for UNITA to complete, without further delay, the crucial tasks of demilitarization and extension of State administration throughout the country. At the same time, UNITA should immediately cease restricting the freedom of movement of MONUA and allow the United Nations to conduct its verification activities without hindrance. Needless to say, the perpetrators of the attacks against MONUA personnel must be duly prosecuted.

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25. At the same time, the Government must conduct the extension of State administration in such a way that it does not aggravate the already tense situation in some areas of the country and to cooperate fully with the United Nations in the investigation of the alleged disappearances and detentions of UNITA supporters. I welcome the temporary suspension by FAA of its special operations in some regions of the country.

26. As the many tasks which had to be performed by the United Nations troops have come to an end, it is my intention to proceed with the drawdown of the personnel of MONUA's military component as outlined in paragraphs 15 and 16 above. I hope that the two Angolan parties, but in particular UNITA, would use the remaining period during which United Nations troops will be present to expedite the implementation of the peace process.

27. I welcome the fact that President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi have agreed on the need to meet inside Angola in the near future. A well-prepared meeting between the two leaders could enhance mutual trust and contribute significantly to improving the prospects for national reconciliation in the country. My Special Representative stands ready to assist in facilitating this meeting.

